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# On the Body and Otherness: Stephen, Bloom, and Their Women

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## I. Joyce's Position in Feminist Critique

Polarized arguments on James Joyce among feminist critics have been an issue in the context of gender studies. Let us examine Joyce's misogynic charges. Sandra Gilbert maintains that Bloom's transformation into a woman signifies "[losing] one's place in the preordained hierarchy that patriarchal culture associates with gender" but "Joyce is also hinting that to be a woman is inevitably to be degraded, to be 'a thing under the yoke'" (396). This statement intimates many things. First, even though Joyce portrays the subversion of patriarchy through femininity, Bloom as a woman is not a real woman but rather a representation of "Bloom's degraded androgyny" (396). Revolutionary power belongs to recreated women in men's minds, not to femininity itself. Thus, according to many feminist critics, including Gilbert,

Bloom's transformation in "Circe" is "what he imagines a woman to be" (McGee 147). In this light, as Coleen Lamos argues, Bloom may be more feminine than Gerty Macdowell, who is interpreted as a queen of patriarchy (132).

Second, as frequently described in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce's women are interpreted as catalysts for men's literary and artistic epiphany by critics. Women are the "degraded" form of men, and the feminine body's beauty is significant only when Stephen's flight from the ideological structure begins. Women, such as beautiful Mercedes as a sign of Stephen's physical lust and E. C. as an adulteress of the Catholic priest, are suggested as feminine forms of what Stephen must overcome. These women of negativity are devices to test Stephen by stimulating his secular desire, and Stephen finally resists them and accomplishes his self-development. What about Joyce's women of affirmation? Like Eileen, who is connected to Virgin, and the Bird girl as a giver of pure beauty, they are limited to secondary roles for men's self-fulfillment. *Ulysses* also reiterates the same structure, in this respect. Repelling the temptation of Nymph, Bloom, at last, breaks the long fantasy and returns to his real-world; nearly expelling his mother's ghost, Stephen sees possibility of a paternal bond with his symbolic father, Bloom. If so, Beryl Schlossman's argument that Joycean men's self-development is connected to what Plato's *Symposium* depicts should be reconsidered. Joycean sexual relation is not "ascent of love, on a ladder of the beautiful and the obscene" (Schlossman 63). Strictly speaking, love does not exist in terms of this structure. Apart from love's intersubjectivity, men's development is only available during the "exile from the feminine" (Cotter 86).

The main argument of critics who view Joyce favorably is grounded in the Derridean context and sexual difference. According to Jacques Derrida, Molly's affirmation "yes" is always an answer to some questions. Accordingly,

it requires the other's participation, which is the presence of another "yes" (299). His argument that the totality of the text is deferred by "yes" allows critics to regard Molly's femininity as the revelation of her otherness. Nothing is more telling on this point than Ewa Ziarek's analysis on *Ulysses*; since Black Mass in "Circe" reveals "the consecration of the womb of unreason" (153), it deconstructs the traditional and paternal relation between art and artists, which Stephen's theory of Shakespeare depicts as "the son consubstantial with the father" (*U* 5.482). Contrary to linear paternity, this "womb of unreason" obstructs the continuity of artistic production, signification, and its fruition incessantly. Sexual difference involves opposite energies that take polarized orientations; whereas maternity is a "dissipation and deferral of meaning," paternity is "the continuity of identity" (Ziarek 157). Joyce's peculiar sense of sexual difference requires readers to take a unique views on men and women. As stated by Heyward Ehrlich, "men and women are ultimately different . . . not only because of their biological, sexual, social, and cultural roles but also because they have different kinds of epiphanies" (99). This is Joyce's characteristic principle when he describes his women characters.

If Joyce has a unique view on sexual difference, his opposite representation of men and women should be approached carefully. The sexual relationship requires both men and women to be agents, prompting them each to manipulate the economy of desire. In other words, sexual difference is the base of the sexual relationship. Mark Osteen, in this context, contends that Molly, the "giver" and the "gift" in the sexual relation, serves as a manipulator of what he calls the "economy of gift exchange" (38). For women have different strategies than men to confront their sexual relationship, the sexual dialectic must be reconsidered by shedding light on the manner in which each of them participates in the other. This is the reason one cannot reduce Joyce

to merely a writer who fears femininity.

Margot Norris explains Joyce's polarized reception through the fundamental difference between French and Anglo-American feminism. While the latter, which emphasizes the relationship between the effect of language and society, reads Joyce's abstruseness as a male writer's exclusion of women, the French feminism focuses on the revolutionary effect of Joyce's "rupturing language's own rhetorical figurations" (5). However, it would be far-fetched to think that the different modes of thinking cause oppositional receptions between the two feminist parties; rather, this differentiation stems from the Joycean texts' internal ambivalence. For instance, domestic Cissy Caffrey in "Nausicaa" reappears in "Circe" as a prostitute. The representation of women is fluid, and femininity is always in transition. They have the difference not only from each other but also from themselves. Thus, the different theoretical understandings of French and Anglo-American feminism are insufficient to expound a decisive cause of Joyce's contentious receptions. Joyce would always be contentious, even if feminism had one body. "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery"(*U.* 5.228-29). Joyce simultaneously shows his texts' front and back, as *Ulysses* proves.

It is difficult to define which criticism is more appropriate to him, insofar as Joyce simultaneously describes both women subordinated by patriarchy and their escape from it. Joyce's simultaneous description of the difference between femininity and masculinity is crucial. If one could find Joyce's patriarchal aspect in his text, it might be because Joyce minutely portrays the essence of patriarchy. If one could also discover women's differences from men, it might be because Joyce also attempts to devise an alternative way for women in the seemingly inescapable patriarchy. In this sense, this paper, synthesizing the two critical tendencies, aims to examine how Joyce discloses

the essence of masculinity through his two male characters, Stephen and Bloom. How men and women differently have their relationships with other sexes is Joyce's central question in *Ulysses* and *A Portrait*. In the relationship between masculinity and women, the body occupies the focal point, because Joyce's description of sexual difference is directly linked to the opposition of male solipsism and the female communicative body. In the light of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body, Stephen's ideal attempt to read women and Bloom's partial view on women's bodies respectively reduce women to their own mind and image. However, Joyce does not let this attempt go on. Reconsidering Gerty's position in sexual relationship and Stephen's perception of Eileen, what Joycean women reveal through their bodies is the otherness that men's understanding and signification cannot grasp at all. Joyce's women accomplish their own flight through their bodies. In Joyce's texts, men's arbitrary interpretation and reconstruction of women must fail when they confront female bodies' otherness.

## II. Masculinity as Solipsism

In "The Body Writing: Joyce's Pen," Derek Attridge highlights the relationship between Joyce's body and his works. His approach does not use any critical theory in order to focus on Joyce's conception of the body. Rather, literally, the thrust is a question about how Joyce wrote his *Ulysses*, especially its last chapter, "Penelope." Tracing Joyce's biography and notes, Attridge presupposes Joyce's body positions, writing circumstances, and physical efforts while Joyce was writing *Ulysses*. Curiously, Attridge stresses that Joyce did not use typewriters and only used pen and ink, speculating that "perhaps Joyce found that the typewriter (like the fountain-pen) deprived him of that intimate

connection between body and words on the page that traditional pens and pencils gave him" (54). The body is already included in Joyce's writing, which is necessarily related to his thinking. Even though this might be merely an interesting assumption, Attridge's argument has its own importance by implying Joycean texts' bodily nature; *Ulysses* is a bodily text written by Joyce's own body.

Attridge's argument does not shed light on the body as an antithesis of the idea, but bodies' importance that already exists in Joyce's idea. *Ulysses* is not only a bodily text, but also written by a complex interrelation between idea and materiality. Numerous critics have pointed this out. John Smurthwaite divides *Ulysses*' main characters into the "visualizer" who thinks through image and the "verbalizer" through language. Molly and Stephen's ways of thinking are different; while she shows off her beautiful body and actively speculates regarding her shape, figure, and bodily orientations, Stephen desires to depart from the body and instead unravels his idea through words. By comparing one who thinks through his idea and the other who thinks through her physical beauty, Joyce juxtaposes the two different modes of thinking.

It is indeed no accident that the division of the idea and materiality is also described as sexual difference—that is, as the difference between men and women. Finn Fordham rightly points out that "In *Ulysses* the protracted slowness of nineteen hours stretched out over 740 pages is compensated for by the fast paced drama of ever-roving internal reflection" (87). When an encounter between the father and the son ends, a woman's internal narrative rages. Many things split man and woman into their respective places, including intensity of thinking, modes of their thoughts, speech, and description. It is apparent that Joyce discovers or invents the fundamental sexual difference. The opposition between men's static, ideal thinking and women's kinetic, bodily idea implies that Joyce attempts to betray some difference between

opposed sexes, genders, and sexualities.

Let us consider Stephen and Bloom's views on women. In "Proteus," Stephen contemplates his visual sense.

> Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them, sure. (*U.* 3.1-5)

Stephen's "coloured signs" indicate that he perceives objects as not themselves. They are signs, produced by a certain signification. Stephen does not perceive the thing as it is but as a production of signification or reconstruction. Since all things are already included in the symbolic network for this young poet, his object is not a "thing-in-itself" but colored "signs." Therefore, he inquires how Aristotle could perceive things' "bodies." For Stephen things are already represented by language and must have their own meaning in their depth.

Stephen's epistemology in the passage is not irrelevant to his sexual perception. According to *Ulysses*' symbolic tradition, water is inseparable from maternity or femininity (Fraser 167). Therefore, Stephen's contemplation of the sea does not depart from his reception of femininity. After he opens the eyes, Stephen "literally" sees strolling women and "ideally" sees them as wombs of sin (U. 3.45). Women are recreated by him to be the sign of original sin; just as the thing must be included into the signification, for Stephen, women must get their meaning, reconstructed by his conception of religion, nationality, and literature. Femininity can exist in Stephen's mind only through representation; he recreates the female nature through his idea.

Whether or not this feminine image has a negative meaning in the novel is a minor question. The issue is that Stephen depends only on his idea, excluding other factors, such as his desire and body. As maintained by Richard P. Lynch, Stephen's "rewriting" only counts for the ideal structure, intentionally ostracizing his bodily desire (73). Stephen's recreation of women comes from his abhorrence for the irrational, religious, oppressive maternity, and the other side of his desire, the yearning for *Amor matris*, is excluded and defeated by Stephen's credo *Non serviam*. Thus, it is only the maternity, rather than the paternal bond, that Stephen can define. Why does he regard maternity as "the only true thing in life" (*U.* 9.843) but paternity as "a legal fiction"(*U.* 9.844)? He knows women and femininity very well because it is he himself who reconstructs the conception of maternity.

If Stephen recreates women through his idea, Bloom's view on women, on the contrary, is dependent on his becoming others. One of his most impressive characteristics is that he puts himself in others' places, which psychoanalysis calls "identification." The object of his identification is comprehensive. He wonders how a cat sees him and visits Mrs. Purefoy due to her dystocia. However, his identification is also a trap in which he can be ensnared, for it serves as Bloom's arbitrary interpretation. Molly's answer "Mn" (*U.* 4.57) does not include any affirmative or negative meaning in itself, but Bloom receives it as "no." Partial conditions turn into a totality of meaning through his interpretation; thus, Bloom does not need to re-ask Molly's true intention. Immediately becoming Molly, he fixes the meaning of the opened text and gives his own to it. Considering Molly's affirmative answer in "Penelope," Bloom's impetuous interpretation changes things to something they are not. He perceives the object already interpreted by him, not the thing itself.

As Valerie Benejam maintains, in "Calypso" Bloom enjoys observing parts of women's bodies, fetishizing them to satisfy his physical lust. The

"fragmentation and fetishization" (66) of the woman's body in Bloom's mind is especially noteworthy. In his dialogue with Molly, her lips, garter, stocking, and petticoat penetrate Bloom's mind (*U.* 4.315-25); an attractive woman in a Dublin street catches his eye, not because of the totality of her beauty but because her buttocks are like "moving hams" (*U.* 4.172). In addition, another woman's white ankle gives Bloom an impression of "esthetes," (*U.* 8.544) since she would be one of the "literary etherial people" (*U.* 8.543). Through Bloom's interpretation the part of the object turns into the totality; Bloom gets his pleasure not from women's bodies nor their love, but from the signifying progress of women in his mind. Bloom's voyeuristic pleasure resides in his own interpretation. Joycean men's pleasure entails, whether it is based on mind or materialistic body, women's transformation into something else, an idealized statue that has a hidden meaning.

If Stephen's reinterpretation of the object indicates that his mind and body are separated from each other, Bloom's shows that he does not see others as a subject of totality as himself. However, according to Merleau-Ponty, "[the thing's sense] is not behind appearances" (333), and "the relation between expression and that which is expressed, or between sign and the signification, is not a one-way relation" (169). Meaning is synthesized through the object's body, and my body is an anchor that enables the communication between I and the other. The body is an axis of communication. Thus, Merleau-Ponty says as follows:

> Vision and movement are specific ways of relating objects and, if a single function is expressed through all of these experiences, then it is the movement of existence, which does not suppress them all under the domination of an "I think," but rather by orienting them toward the inter-sensory unity of a "world." (139)

The structure of consciousness is not subordinated to ideal structure, which is what Merleau-Ponty calls "I think." The solipsistic idea does not include others' existence but only clings to maintaining its separateness from them. "I think" does not offer any communication with others by itself, as the Cartesian *cogito* implies. Rather, the possibility of communication is created by bodily existence, or what Merleau-Ponty calls "I can." For the world is not an external object but "the inter-sensory unity," my internal sense is directly linked to the external. The body lets me orient or "transcend" to external things, and those things come to me through my body. The agent of communication between inside and outside is grounded in the body as a totality, not in a mind of solipsism.

Stephen's perception is an example of an idealistic understanding of the object. As many critics have argued, Stephen's abhorrence of the body is significant in the way that his view on women has been established. As David Cotter rightly contends, in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Stephen's disgust against the liquid reminds him of the mother as an "abject," signifying "a separation of body and soul, or self" (38). Thus, recreating the female body as an absence through his mind, he is repeatedly "desexualized" (48). Margaret McBride also points out the relation between Stephen's abhorrence for the physical body and his mother's death, arguing that Stephen denies "man' mortal nature" (119) and pursues the artistic path in order to achieve eternal life. Stephen empties out his body and fills the ideal structure into this void. However, the body "has its world, or understands its world without having to go through representations, or without being subordinated to symbolic or objectifying function" (Merleau-Ponty 141). This is what Stephen does not know in *Ulysses*; as a production of the idealism, Stephen's perception inaugurates women as a hidden treasure chest, the object of his analysis that conceals something within them. Idealized by the male gaze, femininity

becomes the statue that conceals the beautiful in their nature.

Bloom's partial perception of others' bodies implies that there is a hierarchy between him and others. If my body's totality is the fundamental field of perception, then the totality of others' bodies is also what makes my perception possible. Thus, perceived objects, strictly speaking, do not remain as "objects," but instead become "an instrument," "an extension of the bodily synthesis" (154). This is what Bloom could not show in *Ulysses*. Bloom is a bodily man insofar as he is faithful to his physical needs and desire, contrary to Stephen, but he annihilates others' bodies by only enjoying their parts. Bodily communication disappears, and Bloom solipsistically attains pleasure from other bodies' fetishization; in fact, Bloom's desired women do not have their own bodies. There is always a stratification between synthesized and fragmented bodies in Bloom's satisfaction. This is another form of solipsism that is not based on idealism.

## III. Female Flight through the Body

The body as an axis of communication is also the body as a difference from the other. I and the other are fundamentally separated from each other through bodily space; thus, the body is a space that involves the irreducible alterity among every existence. In matter of sexuality, this difference becomes more apparent. The difference between men's and women's bodies produces the difference in their respective perceptions. What Merleau-Ponty calls "the body as a sexed being" is, in this sense, a synonym of the body of sexual difference.

According to Merleau-Ponty, sexuality is not a passive representation but an "intentionality" (156), for every bodily experience is "projected in his

sexuality" (161). Sexuality is always the transcendence to the other, has its own orientation, and requires a relationship. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty's conception of "the body as a sexed being" intimates a critical nature of bodily experience. What has been regarded as a passivity—especially what Simone de Beauvoir calls "immanence"—is not the absence of agency but the other activity mode of femininity. Let us take the case of aphonia in *Phenomenology of Conception*. As maintained by Merleau-Ponty, aphonia is not a deprivation of voice but speaking through silence (164). The bodily existence is always in the movement in the sense that it always expresses itself to the other. Likewise, the inertia of the feminine body is also the form of female activity, which the patriarchal gaze cannot grasp. Female inertia comprises the other activities of women in order to escape from the preordained positions in patriarchy.

Many critics have focused on the feminine passivity in Joyce's novels. Since passivity is a form of representation, it is located at the level of gender; in fact, women's passive roles are inseparable from social needs that prompt women to stay in domestic fields. However, it is questionable whether Joyce's conception of sexual difference can be defined solely by gender—that is, the cultural aspects and its reception of the subject. Ehrlich explains that Joyce "departs significantly from feudal gender stereotypes" through "the modernist image of the biologically undifferentiated individual in a sexually unified culture of man and woman" (88). What is the "sexually unified culture" of Joyce's Dublin? Considering Dublin society as depicted in *Ulysses*, this is such a questionable argument. In Dublin, the spaces of men and women are devided from each other. As Margaret Mills Harper argues, the internal time in which Molly stays and Bloom's external time are different (176). In "Nausicaa," Bloom's stopped watch indicates the presence of two different times: the external-objective time of Bloom and the frozen time of his home, or Molly's.

Molly's monologue (or dialogue?) in "Penelope" indicates that time inside the home is much slower but more powerful than Bloom's busy life in the Dublin streets. As if Molly and Bloom's time is differentiated by each other, Dublin men and women reside in different spaces and times. Thus, first, there is no "sexually unified culture" in *Ulysses*, as Ehrlich argues; sexual difference is a movement that keeps differentiating from each other, or from itself.

More importantly, as men and women's different experiences in *Ulysses* implies, sexual difference is not only dependent on gender or culture. The body exists in the center of sexual difference. As Merleau-Ponty argues, to define the perceived thing only replaces the thing with an imperfect reconstruction due to one's subjectivity. The thing cannot be reduced to my subjective attempt; namely, it "denies" (339) my body, and I "must live things in order to perceive them" (340). Therefore, perception does not reconstruct the object but only can experience it. The object is not only my correlation but also the position that my ideal reconstruction always fails. It is the body that marks the difference between the two existences.

Stephen's reconstruction of women's bodies frequently occurs in his personal history. In Stephen's mind, women mainly appear as idealized and tabooed. Eileen in *A Portrait* is the first girl who is idealized by Stephen's mind and desire. Connected with "Tower of Ivory" (43), she is perceived as her white hand by Stephen and becomes the Virgin. It is noteworthy that she is tabooed at the beginning of the novel. As Dante's harsh response to Stephen shows, Eileen as a Protestant is an untouchable object for Stephen. Their encounter is, from the beginning, imbued with the impossibility of the sexual relationship.

> Eileen had long thin cool white hands too because she was a girl. They were like ivory; only soft. That was the meaning of *Tower of Ivory* but protestants could not understand it and made fun of it. . . She had put her

> hand into his pocket where his hand was and he had felt how cool and thin and soft her hand was. She had said that pockets were funny things to have: and then all of a sudden she had broken away and had run laughing down the sloping curve of the path. Her fair hair had streamed out behind her like gold in the sun. *Tower of Ivory. House of Gold.* By thinking of things you could understand them. (43)

Eileen's white hands and "Tower of Ivory" indicate that she is linked to the Virgin in Stephen's mind, as many critics already contended. However, it has been overlooked that the Virgin's divinity is inseparable from her physicality. According to Mary Lowe Evans, who studies Joycean women through the lens of Mariology, Virgin's image as an assistant of Jesus has gradually become more sexual, especially combined with Mary Magdalena; since Mary Magdalena as a symbol of physical obscenity and sin infiltrated into Virgin's divinity, Virgin has served as a *femme fatale*, the seductive object of men's desire (105). In this sense, Eileen is an avatar of the ambivalent Virgin; she is worshipped and sexually desired by Stephen at the same time. "Tower of Ivory" is not praise for pure Virgin, but King Solomon's sexual praise for Shulamite's sexual body in its original meaning. Eileen is a sacred and pure girl for Stephen's mind, but at the level of his desire, she becomes Stephen's Shulamite; Stephen's love for her does not exclude his love for her body.

The relationship between Stephen and Eileen is, therefore, far from the sublime relationship between ideas. In Stephen's recollection of her, numerous things infiltrate into her pure image: drinking the altar wine, stealing the cash out of the rector's room, "smugging" (40). These blasphemies adulterate not only Clongowes but Eileen's pureness; and Stephen's love is not different from these profane acts. He loves Virgin's body that seduces him with a mysterious light.

Since young Stephen does not know her inaccessible position, in the passage above, he can touch her whenever he wants. Nevertheless, the taboo of Eileen is not broken. Eileen's escape from Stephen is described, and Stephen inertly observes Eileen's appearance from behind. "Eileen had long thin cool white hands too because she was a girl," Stephen says. His experience of Eileen is sexual, but there is a fundamental gap between him and her; Stephen feels that he and Eileen are different from each other through their bodies, confirming her otherness. Thus, he cannot grasp Eileen, who escapes from himself; Stephen understands the meaning of the signs of her, "Tower of Ivory" and "House of Gold," by watching Eileen's flight from him; now, they all indicate that Eileen is not the thing Stephen reduces to himself. Taboo is, in this context, not only for men's enshrinement of women but a literary device to confirm female otherness to male fantasy.

In this light, it is necessary to reconsider the positions of tabooed women in Joyce's narrative. In *Araby*, Mangan's sister is the object of the boy's adoration, enshrined in his mind and becoming his "chalice" (*D* 22). Nevertheless, as if Eileen is adulterated by profane images, Araby, the Promised Land of the boy, is in fact imbued with dirtiness and banality that is contrary to his expectation. His epiphany is the disenchantment with female sexuality that he previously considered the holy grail he must protect. Mangan's sister disappears from the narrative insofar as she collapses the boy's mystical expectation. She is enshrined by the boy but finally serves to deconstruct the male fantasy; there is no hidden treasure in femininity. Revealing the nothingness in women's mysterious appearances, Joycean women function as a device to disclose and suspend male signification.

*Ulysses* also repeats the identical narrative structure in some senses. Bloom's encounter with Gerty in "Nausicaa" also involves the irreducible otherness of the woman's body. The narrator of "Nausicaa" has a masculine

view of women, especially devoting a lot of space to describing Gerty's politeness and dignity. Connected to "pale blue" (*U.* 13.175), she becomes the Virgin, but she is also the Lady in courtly love who conceals "a gnawing sorrow" (*U.* 13.188). She waits for a knight, but this knight is not a Prince Charming but a middle-aged man who "[takes] her in his sheltering arms" (*U.* 13.212).

In this respect, as many critics have already maintained, Gerty is a comforter of a man, the "queen of patriarchs" (*U.* 13.499). Suzette Henke has repeatedly debunked the phallic fantasy that Gerty shows. According to her, Gerty is "a phallic image of female desirability onto a sculpted figure of virginal lack"(87), the girl "trying to increase her market value beyond what her economic status can easily maintain" (89). Many critics have been under the influence of Henke's argument. For example, Evans regards Gerty as an assistant of patriarchy, just as Virgin supports God's will (106). Gerty seems to exist insofar as she satisfies men's pleasure, being a supporter of the fixed patriarchic desire of Bloom.

It is undeniable that Gerty is idealized by the narrator of "Nausicaa" like traditional courtly love, but at the level of the interrelation of desire the problem is not that simple. Julia Kristeva, explaining the relation between the Virgin and the Lady in courtly love, argues that the correlation between them results in the woman's "inaccessible" but "accomplished" (245) position. The Lady is absolutely "inaccessible," but that does not indicate that she cannot be "accomplished." Rather, as Jacques Lacan stresses, she becomes "the value of representing the Thing" (126) that catalyzes a male knight's desire. The man must prove himself in order to get the Lady and finally shows his virility to her. The manner in which he gets the object is a successful manifestation of his own masculinity. An idealized woman, in courtly love, functions as a catalyst of masculine self-improvement.

Courtly love in "Nausicaa" distorts and reverses this conventional form of courtly love by exchanging Bloom and Gerty's positions. Distancing from Gerty Bloom gets a sexual pleasure, but this does not indicate Bloom;s full-fledged manifestations of his virility; rather, as the repeated "Cuckoo"(*U.* 13.1288-91) and "the stick fell in silted sand" (*U.* 13.1270) imply, his masculinity remains trivial and trifling at the end of the chapter. Rather, it is Gerty who idealizes her partner, Bloom. Even Bloom's masturbation is "altogether different from a thing like that" (*U.* 13.706) for Gerty. Thus, she seduces him by showing her white legs and beautiful hair. Courtly love is reversed. The traditional structure of courtly love—that is, securing a woman through the manifestation of virility—turns into securing a man by discovering and showing one's femininity.

In this light, "Nausicaa" is the prelude to Bloom's sexual transformation in "Circe" in that femininity obtains a new possibility of subversion. If "Circe" literally reverses the biological sexes of Bloom, "Nausicaa" focuses on the level of sexual relationship inverting the conventional sexual roles of love. The conventional structure of desire, which signifies the man as a subject of the gaze and the woman as an object, is collapsed. Gerty's pleasure stems from her dominant position, her agency manipulating and controlling Bloom's desire and sexual pleasure. She attains her sexual pleasure by using Bloom's body.

> Tight boots? No. She's lame. O!
> Mr Bloom watched her as she limped away. Poor girl! That's why she's left on the shelf and the others did a sprint. Thought something was wrong by the cut of her jib. Jilted beauty. A defect is ten times worse in a woman. But makes them polite. Glad I didn't know it when she was on show. (*U.* 13.771-76)

"Nausicaa" does not limit itself to switch their gender roles but discloses

the other side of Bloom's male desire. No sooner than Gerty's limping leg is revealed, his sexual fantasy is immediately broken. Bloom's astonishment and relief, "Glad I didn't know it when she was on show," indicates that Gerty's uncomfortable body obstructs him to attain sexual pleasure. Here, there is a preordained form of the ideal body in Bloom's mind. Women must take this form insofar as they serve to give sexual pleasure to Bloom. Gerty, who has beautiful legs, was an embodiment of this ideal body until the limp in her leg was revealed; however, this revelation spoils Bloom's sexual experience.

Gerty's white and fair leg was an object of Bloom's desire but now collapses Bloom's phallic fantasy by revealing her disability. A limping leg is no longer beautiful and does not stimulates his sexual fantasy. After Gerty departs from him, Bloom's fancy expands to the woman itself and femininity, but his fancy only manifests the form of the ideal woman in his mind. "Why don't all women menstruate at the same time with the same moon, I mean" (*U.* 13.783-84), he asks, because there is only one female idol for him, enshrined, worshipped and desired by his phallic fantasy. Bloom recognizes that what he thought Gerty's fragrance was in fact the smell of his lemon soap (*U.* 13.1042); his ideal femininity resides in himself, not his partner. Bloom has a relationship with women in his mind, like the statues without anuses in the museum. Thus, Gerty becomes a "little limping devil" (*U.* 13.852) after his masturbation, and Bloom recreates his own Gerty in his daydream (*U.* 13.1279-85). Of course, this new Gerty does not limp anymore.

## IV. On the body and Otherness

The idealization of women's bodies have been a problematic allegations of Stephen, Bloom, and even Joyce. In this sense, these critical views regard the

Joycean female body as “an erotic vessel for men’s needs”(Eide 79)—namely the object of the male gaze. However, the body resists being ensnared by objectification; it denies being included by external reduction and expresses itself relentlessly. “My body is an object that is always with me. But then, is it still an object? . . . In particular, the object is only an object if it can be moved away and ultimately disappear from my visual field. Its presence is such that it requires a possible absence” (Merleau-Ponty 92). For the body cannot disappear from my perception, it denies being reduced to an objectification. The mother’s ghost is, therefore, a symptom of Stephen, who wants to exclude and erase his desire and body. “The permanence of one’s own body” (Merleau-Ponty 92) is a conundrum Stephen faces.

The relationship between the body and another body is inter-participative. The “tension from one existence to another existence” (Merleau-Ponty 171) is emanated by their bodies, and this is what Joyce portrays through Bloom’s sexual relationship. It is remarkable that Bloom’s phallic fantasy negates reception of Gerty's limping leg especially in terms of sexual context. Since this phallic fantasy only desires to possess the beautifully-idealized female body, it is an obstacle that misleads sexual relations elsewhere.

It is the body that manifests female otherness, making woman’s flight possible; suspending the phallic fantasy, Joycean women accomplish a different kind of flight than his men. If Bloom’s male identity remains intact despite his transformation into a woman at the level of gender and sex, this transformation is not a literary device to express the male gender’s fluidity but the device to make a clear difference between men and women. Joycean women, contrary to Stephen and Bloom’s solipsistic desire and interpretation, accomplish their flight through female bodies. Joyce portrays women’s other kind of flight, using his deep and peculiar understanding of sexual difference and bodily existence.

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**Abstract**

## On The Body and Otherness: Stephen, Bloom, and Their Women

Wooil Lee

This paper examines how James Joyce discloses the essence of masculinity through female characters' bodies. Joyce's position in feminist criticism has been polarized, especially regarding his description of masculinity. While some feminist critics have argued that Joyce is one of the exemplary patriarchal artists in the twentieth century, others espouse him because of Joyce's use of femininity as an expression of otherness. This article synthesizes both of them, arguing that Joyce's misogynic charges stem from his meticulous description of the difference between man and woman. By portraying Stephen's negation of his own body and women's reduction to his idea, Joyce describes how masculinity as an idealism attempts to reconstruct and recreate women in accordance with the phallic fantasy. Moreover, Bloom's perception of women's partial body also signifies that in his mind there is one form of the body that stimulates Bloom's sexual pleasure. However, it is the female body that delays and impedes their phallic fantasy. Using Maurice Merleau-Ponty's conception of the body, this paper finally maintains that Joyce depicts women characters' flights from masculine signification through their bodies.

■ Key words : Sexual Difference, Body, Otherness, Masculinity, Maurice Merleau-Ponty
(성차, 몸, 타자성, 남성성, 모리스 메를로-퐁티)

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